Agreement (NAFTA) envisages the establishment of free trade area in 10—15 years. Our major market in North America is the United States. As Canada and Mexico do not directly compete with our major exports to the US, it is not anticipated that there will be any immediate adverse implications for India's exports.

India prefers the multilateral approach to the regional approach in international trade. Therefore, our efforts have been to strengthen multilateralism during the Uruguay Round.

However, India cooperates with other developing countries in preferential trading arrangements. These include the SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA). Currently negotiations are going on amongst member states to determine the product coverage.

Potential for Agro Exports

317. DR. NAUNIHAL SINGH : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) what is the potential for agro-exports during remaining period of Eighth Five Year Plan ;

(b) what are the hurdles in exploiting the potential with details thereof ; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government to overcome the hurdles ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) The export projections for agro-exports at the end of the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992—97) including tea, coffee, rubber and cotton is Rs. 12,064 crores at 1991-92 prices.

(b) and (c) The international market for basic agricultural foodstuffs viz. cereals, dairy products, meat and sugar is constrained by not only high barriers in the principal markets but also by the massive export subsidies granted by US, EEC, etc.

At present, an intense struggle is on between the important trading nations to bring about a major improvement in market access and market distortive measures.

Lack of infrastructural facilities (like air cargo facilities not keeping pace, inadequate shipping facilities), high air freight rates and lack of vapour treatment facilities are the major hurdles in fully exploiting the potential for exports of agricultural commodities. A programme has been drawn up for up-grading the infrastructural facilities during the Eighth Plan period, to be implemented, by the Ministry of Agriculture. On the export of fresh fruits and vegetables, air freight subsidy will be made available on a selective basis.

Commercial Outfits in Indian Missions Abroad

318. DR. NAUNIHAL SINGH : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to expand the scope and role of commercial outfits in various Indian Missions abroad ;

(b) if so, in what manner with details thereof ;

(c) whether Government are considering to make the commercial outfits to be more responsible and accountable for achieving the trade target fixed by the Ministry ; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) to (d) The Manual of Instructions to Commercial Representatives Abroad is currently under revision which *inter-alia* seeks to effectively re-define the role of Commercial Representatives enabling them to respond to the needs of Indian industry and business in the context of the economic liberalisation undertaken.